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ABSTRACT

The running of the Los Angeles Community College District incorporates two distinct kinds of functions: those of an educational nature and those that are corporate in scope. While the educational functions have been performed well, the future will demand even greater responsiveness to student needs. Issues to be faced in the future to insure that these educational functions are accomplished satisfactorily include the following: (1) each college must develop its own distinct identity; (2) growing numbers of foreign students will require that new programs and services be provided to meet their needs; (3) more emphasis must be placed on developing cooperation, rather than competition, between elements of public higher education; (4) commitment to affirmative action must remain a top priority; and (5) the 1979-80 academic year will require thoughtful preparation for re-negotiation of contracts. With regard to corporate functions, major accomplishments have been made in data processing and in regard to the 1978-79 audit. Other notable efforts of the 1978-79 academic year were the institution of grants for the purpose of developing, refurbishing, and upgrading galleries and fine arts programs, and a proposal for a tenth college in the district. (AYC)

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1979 STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

Remarks by
Dr. Leslie Koltai, Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District

Board of Trustees Meeting
September 26, 1979

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For the past few years, we have had a tradition here at the Los Angeles Community College District of taking time out, with a State of the District address, to give ourselves an overview of the prior academic year—and to set goals for the year ahead. This year, we have asked the presidents of each of our nine colleges to join in this tradition by presenting State of the College reports, in which they will highlight issues particular to their individual campuses.

I believe this kind of in-depth discussion is in order, because the past year has certainly been the most difficult in the ten-year history of this District. But we have been able to learn a great deal from that year—we learned that, by working together, we could deal effectively with the impact of Proposition 13, and we learned how to solidify the foundations upon which to build the second decade of this District.

By the way, I would like to point out that we have been able to accomplish this because of the great spirit of cooperation and teamwork we have seen throughout the District. Today's meeting provides me with a good opportunity to thank members of the Board of Trustees, the faculty, the staff, and the administration for their continuing efforts in this direction.

I have heard it said that we are able to learn more about ourselves during periods of adversity than when things are running smoothly, and I believe this is true. What we have learned about ourselves at the Los Angeles Community College District is that we have many dedicated, talented people who are willing to put the welfare of the students and the District as a whole above their own personal considerations. It is because of all of you that we have been able to come this far—and I thank you for it.

As Chancellor, my top priority has always been to maintain the dominance of educational objectives over all other considerations. Perpetuating the quality of our educational offerings must continue to take precedence over other issues which might dilute our strength in this area.

Leslie Koltai

Chancellor

Educational and corporate functions

We have learned that the running of this District incorporates two distinct kinds of functions: those of an educational nature and those which could be called corporate in scope.

I believe the educational functions have been performed well. And, through the reorganization underway in the Educational Services Division, we can be assured of even greater responsiveness to student needs in the future.

In addition, we are working to bring our educational budget planning cycles into closer synchronization so that priorities can be based upon educational goals—and I would like to repeat—educational goals. The fiscal uncertainties imposed by Proposition 13 forced us to base our budget priorities on how many dollars we estimated would be available. But we are hoping that the future will find us better able to base these decisions upon a predetermined educational plan.

And speaking of the relationship that exists between educational programs and fiscal considerations, our Educational Services Division will work more aggressively to secure outside funding in the form of state and federal grants. We will be seeing increased staff emphasis on this function at the campus level.

The past year has also shown us that carrying out our corporate functions has called for new systems in order to function more effectively in the future.

Just to name a few, there are computer operation, accounting, and purchasing. I will discuss these areas of operations and concern in greater detail a little bit later.

Let's deal first with the educational, financial and political considerations for the coming year.

My first observation is that we need to devote consistent attention to developing a stable enrollment with which we can deal effectively. Our first real venture into advertising, which was undertaken this summer, has had a positive impact on enrollment figures and reinforced our commitment to expand our informational activities.

Toward this end, I am establishing a committee of college presidents to work with the Office of Communications Services to establish goals, directions, and guidelines for our future efforts.

I believe that the process of informing students of the programs and services which we have developed to meet their needs—and of choosing the most effective means through which to disseminate that information—is a function consistent with our educational goals.

The second priority will continue to be the development of quality education and continued dedication to maintenance of program vitality.

College identity stressed

I believe it is going to be more important than ever for each college to develop its own distinct identity based upon its individual strengths.

Therefore, I would like to encourage a greater sense of college identity—a greater awareness of exactly what makes a particular campus unique in the statewide structure of higher education, and a more successful understanding of the community that encompasses the college.

This is necessary because we cannot expect members of our community to look to us to meet their specific and ever-changing needs if we don't let them know exactly what we can do—and do well—for them.

This is the era of student consumerism. Students are more aware of which educational options they will choose to pursue, and they are better informed about the choices available to them. It is up to us, however, to make sure that we communicate with them about the opportunities our colleges provide and the services for which they can turn to us.

This is especially important today, because community colleges have moved from their previous function of screening out people who—for academic or financial reasons—could not go to a four-year institution. We are no longer the "incubator" institutions which prematurely transfer students to four-year colleges. We are finding that students are **choosing** to attend a community college instead of a four-year institution—and quite often, this choice is based upon their recognition of the strengths of our wide-ranging programs, courses, services and faculty.

Our colleges have a great variety of two-year programs and outstanding, experienced, student-oriented faculty, and ever-improving facilities that are appealing to a wide range of students. Through our continued efforts to be responsive to our students and the communities we serve, it is my hope that we will be able to make our institutions even more attractive and more unique as time goes on.

I believe it is important to note that, even with all the changes that have taken place during the last year in California public higher education, community colleges are still the best bargain around for those who wish to pursue academic education, vocational education, or vocational training.

A recent report by the California Community and Junior College Association pointed out that more than 88 percent of all lower division college students in this state are attending community colleges. That's right—nearly nine out of every ten college freshmen and sophomores in a public college or university in California are attending a conveniently-located, tuition-free community college.

And studies also show that the education provided at community colleges is less costly to the taxpayer than the equivalent two-year work at the University of California or the California State College and University system.

It costs California taxpayers an average of $1,635 dollars per year to send a student to a community college. By the way, this cost in the Los Angeles Community Colleges is $1,853, which is substantially less than the $3,250 cost to the public to educate the same student at the University of California, and compares favorably with the $2,361 it costs per year to educate that student at the California State University system.

Community colleges are international

It is interesting to note that community colleges are also becoming an international marketplace, with growing numbers of foreign students enrolled in our institutions. This changing student profile means that we will have to provide new services for those students and develop new programs to meet their needs. Legally, it would be enough to continue to maintain the same level of quality education we have always provided. But I believe we have a moral and ethical obligation to analyze the needs of these students—such as the Vietnamese Boat People—and then develop appropriate new programs to help them make the difficult adjustment to the American culture, business world, and way of life.

At this time, I would also like to point out that funds have been earmarked for a program to improve staff ability to deal with the District's multi-cultural population. The staff development program is currently being coordinated, and I believe it will do a great deal to increase our sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of students and employees within our district.

And, speaking of international considerations, I believe the time has arrived for us, as the largest community college district in the country, to look seriously at our educational commitment to those in the military attending classes through our Overseas program.

We anticipate enrollment of about 36,000 students this year in approximately 60 foreign locations. I believe that the significant growth or this operation is cause for an in-depth look at the program. I am leaving tomorrow to make a first-hand inspection of the Overseas program, and will make appropriate recommendations about the future of this operation when I return.

Now, I would like to discuss a new phenomenon which I expect will occupy our attention in the years ahead, and that is the anticipated—indeed, the already visible—competition between various segments of higher education to attract students.

There are a number of factors leading to this situation including that which we've already talked about—the declining pool of high school graduates that has resulted from lower birth rates in the past decades.

And there was the recent change in the basic philosophy of federal financial aid, which has resulted in those funds being given to the student instead of to the institution. This has caused an evolution in the relationship between segments of higher education across the country.

Institutional cooperation vital

Instead of **competition**—which can prove to be quite unproductive—I would like to see more emphasis placed on **cooperation** between elements of public higher education. We are currently involved in developing a program in conjunction with the California State University system to train instructors from their institutions and ours to implement developmental education. This project, and the very successful Basic Skills Conference we co-hosted with California State University last Spring, are evidence that meaningful programs **can** evolve when we combine—rather than dilute—our educational expertise.

These trends toward cooperation versus competition will require that each college undertake a careful review of its own strengths, realizing that no institution can be all things to all people.

And we here in the Los Angeles Community College District will have no choice but to encourage development of those strengths—and to discourage duplication of programs that are less than superior at any individual colleges.

This is going to require a revision in our traditional way of looking at things—but I believe that this is the only logical way in which we can realistically approach the environment in which we are operating.

It is also important to note that the economy is edging toward a recession in which community colleges will be called upon to serve the needs of the economically displaced, the unemployed, the under-employed. But, at the same time, the state is **not** encouraging enrollment increases in our colleges, and public support for our institutions is dwindling. I believe that this situation is going to require that we make sure that the functions we can and do perform in periods of slow economic growth are known—and that we work to encourage more public support for the job we are doing in this regard.

Last year at this time, I discussed my fears about the increasing role the state was going to be playing in our governance. I see no reason to relax those fears today. Attention in the state legislature is focusing with increased intensity on altering the long-standing relationship our colleges have had with Sacramento. And the past year has brought about many changes in our day-to-day operation. There is no reason to think that our vigilance should be relaxed in regard to changing relationships vis-a-vis the state in the area of governance and priority-setting. If anything, our attention is going to be increasingly drawn to this area of concern.

Affirmative action a top priority

There is another area that requires our constant attention—that of affirmative action. This District has made a firm commitment to continued responsiveness to the needs of minorities, women, and others who—because of their background—have also been designated as members of a protected group. This is a commitment that has a top priority with all of us.

I believe it is important that each employee in this District become, in effect, an active participant in our affirmative action program. No matter how aggressive our official program might be, the most positive and long-lasting changes will be put into effect only if we are all—I would like to repeat, all—involved in enforcing our affirmative action policies.

Now I would like to make a couple of observations about our employee relations.

New round of collective bargaining

The 1979-80 academic year will see this District gearing up for a new round of collective bargaining as we prepare to re-negotiate three of our existing contracts. We have all learned a great deal about this process from our first experience with the collective bargaining endeavor, and we all know the benefit of adequate preparation. I expect this preparation to pave the way to professional contract negotiations again.

From the vantage point of our prior experience with negotiations, however, I believe we can conclude that the implementation of a contract is much more complicated than we would have previously thought.

It has become clear during the past two years that a tremendous amount of time has had to be devoted to settling grievances. This points to the fact that we need to develop better communication between the various parties involved in order to settle these problems earlier, rather than letting them develop into full-fledged grievances.

Speaking of collective bargaining, I would like to note the fine record this Board has established of reasonable, responsible attention to salary concerns. However, may I point out, new funding mechanisms from the state are such that we will soon find ourselves unable to even keep up with cost-of-living increases. I have serious concern about the state funding formula in this regard, and I would like to remind you that this is a matter that will require our ongoing vigilance.

Considerations of financial implications of collective bargaining will continue to have their impact in our educational decision-making. It was a heavy burden, for example, to decrease the faculty teaching load to the present 15-hour level, which now exists with some exceptions.

In fact, this provision of the current contract has forced us to look into developing methods of instruction that would be non-traditional and different from the existing, traditional academic and vocational programs we offer.

Corporate functions improved

And now, as I promised, I would like to get back to the area of the audit and the data processing operation—which may not be the most exciting things to talk about but, as I indicated before, we have two areas of responsibility—the securing of the dominance of our educational programs over any other consideration, and we also have the responsibility of our corporate functions. I am happy to report something that used to be routine before but that today is news—we have closed our books.

I believe that the Board's ad hoc audit committee has served as an effective liaison between the Board and the administration in this matter, establishing a relationship that will help to expedite these procedures in the future.

We are looking forward to utilizing the internal audit more effectively as a management planning tool, and I believe the appointment of a manager of internal audit will enable us to fully reach this goal.

In the data processing area, we plan to implement the recommendations submitted by Arthur Young and Company, and I sincerely hope that these changes will provide better planning and communication. I would like to add that we have a series of recommendations which we have to look at in the continuous saga of the computer. As a matter of fact, we hope that the recommended data processing policy committee; the data processing advisory committee; the reorganization of the data processing branch; the establishment of a chargeback system for our data processing service; and the development of an overall operational plan, adding the revised procedures, and policies for maintenance and planning of equipment will lead us to better serve the interests of our college community.

Our data processing capability will also be utilized in implementing online registration, which will be tested at two colleges in the summer of 1980.

Assuming that this program is successful, two additional colleges will be added to the program in fall of 1980. Once again assuming no major difficulties, two more colleges will have online registration in Spring, 1981.

The plan is to have the system available to all nine colleges by the Fall of 1981.

A number of other changes are also being implemented in the Administrative Services Division in order to improve accountability and effective operation. For example, we are moving a significant number of the purchasing functions to the campuses in order to increase responsiveness to the needs of the individual

colleges—and, first of all, the faculty. This change should expedite the purchasing process and speed up payment of vendors. We are also establishing an Office of College Services—same personnel, no additions—which will be responsible for facilitating relations between the college and District Office personnel.

And, speaking of accountability and improved communication, during the coming year we can also expect to see a continuation of our examination of the relationship between the Personnel Commission and Personnel Services Division.

The measures I have mentioned will be instrumental—I hope—in reaching our educational goals. But I believe it is imperative that we not forget the importance of raising our sights to encompass some of the finer things that a community college can offer its constituents.

For this reason, we have developed a tradition of focusing special attention on one specific area of our college curriculum each year. Previous years have seen the institution of grants and the implementation of colloquia on such special areas as the humanities, developmental skills, and the sciences.

"The Great Art Search"

This year, we have instituted grants to the nine colleges for the purpose of developing, refurbishing, and upgrading their galleries and fine arts programs—part of what we are calling "The Great Art Search." It is my intention that these grants be used to foster the awareness and appreciation of the arts on our college campuses, as well as to make these galleries focal points for the colleges—and the communities they serve—in the ongoing celebration of artistic endeavor.

I believe that this action is timely—even in view of our current preoccupation with measurable, dollars-and-cents relevance.

The most cost-efficient systems, the most productive procedures, and the most streamlined institutions will be of no avail if we do not have the means by which to remind ourselves of our humanity and the seed of creativity and artistic expression that exist in all of us. When we plan for the future, we cannot neglect this area of growth, of creativity and, after all, of meaning.

What I am speaking about, really, is responding to social realities in our community through the remarkable adaptability of our institutions. That responsiveness can be found in the fine arts program I just mentioned, and it can be found, in another way, in the joint program we are working on with Los Angeles County to try to solve the local nursing shortage by educating more potential nurses.

Both programs address themselves to different needs of those whom we serve. But both also show the wide-ranging ways in which we are constantly planning and adapting to meet those needs—and to play a meaningful role in the lives of members of our communities.

And—speaking of the future—we have few illusions left about our fiscal future. We know we are still in a period of transition. But I remind you that this planning is going to require us to keep in mind that maintenance of the status quo is no longer an option. It is not a matter of choice whether or not to adapt to change—change **is** coming about with increased frequency; our only choice will be in determing the effectiveness with which we deal with that change.

And I submit to you that it will be incumbent upon us to **initiate** change—to be **active** rather than **passive** responders to the conditions which will be coloring the public education picture in this state, in Los Angeles, and indeed in the country.

I believe that re-assessment of our non-traditional offerings is in line with this philosophy of initiating creative change. We in the Los Angeles Community College District led the way in this area when we established our Office for New Dimensions, and a number of other districts are benefitting from our study and experience. But the combined external and internal influences of the traumatic days of 1978 dealt a death blow to the program—although our collective bargaining agent and the members of the Board deserve our appreciation for the vision that made it a reality.

Tenth college proposed

There has been a gap in the range of programs and services we have been able to provide since New Dimensions was disbanded. And, since our district must remain responsive to the needs of the metropolitan community—I would like to announce today that I have asked the Educational Services division for its recommendations regarding the establishment of our tenth college . . . the Los Angeles Metropolitan College (for Non-Traditional Studies), which would continue our efforts to deliver a variety of programs in non-traditional modes. By January 1, 1980, the first day of the new decade, I will make a recommendation to the Board for the establishment of a college and for seeking independent accreditation from the appropriate agencies.

Funding for the preparatory study is available within the current budget, and we will utilize available personnel.

I consider it to be an indication of the strength of our district that we now find ourselves in a position to discuss this concept—and, once again, I would like to express my appreciation to all of

our personnel for your outstanding efforts during this difficult, transition time.

But I must emphasize that we can not slack off now—our responsibility to our students and to the continued vitality of the District require that we rededicate ourselves to the basic work ethic upon which this country was founded. I appeal to all members of the college community to work together to improve the quality of service we offer, and I intend to recommend that appropriate standards be established. There will be no place in our future for those who do less than their share; there will be no tolerance for those who are looking for a free ride. We have accomplished great things together by hard work and dedication. The future will call for no less. It will be up to us to provide what is needed to make our dreams for that future become a reality.

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